REMARKS

The rejections of Claims 2-13 and 16-18 as being anticipated by Abe under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and of Claims 14 and 15 as being unpatentable over Abe under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are traversed. Reconsideration of each of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Although the shell of Abe can expand, it is a rigid shell unlike the present invention in which the shell is non-rigid and can be made from a limp, preferably tear-resistant material, or an elastic material. This approach provides great flexibility in constructing the actuator in a manner not suggested in the Abe patent. Applicants note that the teachings of Abe do not go materially beyond what they described as the state of the art at pages 1 and 2 of their Specification.

Furthermore, Applicants believe that the Office Action has not demonstrated how the Abe patent teaches the features found in the dependent claims, most notably Claims 4-7 and 10. In this connection, Applicants submit herewith a new Claim 19 which recites the features of those dependent claims in combination, something clearly not remotely suggested in the prior art as exemplified by Abe.
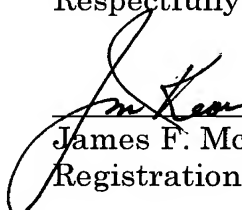
Accordingly, early and favorable action is earnestly solicited.

If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #095309.55774US).

Respectfully submitted,

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